

The Third Angel's Message. What Is It, as to the Beast and His Image?

"AND the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:9-12.

Such is the Third Angel's Message in itself. And what an awful thing it must be to "worship the beast and his image," when the doing of it brings such fearful consequences as are here spoken! What a wicked thing it must be for any one to "worship the beast and his image," when the warning against it must be put in such words as are the words of the warning in this message! And yet the worship of the beast and his image will be so widespread that the message of warning against it must be made universal in the words "if any man worship the beast and his image," etc.

The universality of this thing, and of the warning against it, is further shown in the fact that this angel follows the one of the eighth verse, and he follows the one of the sixth verse; and the message of the angel of the sixth verse is "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." And since the second and the third unmistakably must go "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people." And since the second and the third follow this one, these two as well as the first unmistakably must go "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." And since this threefold message, culminating in the warning of the third angel against the worship of the beast and his image, goes thus to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, and the warning always and everywhere is against the worship of the beast and his image, this shows that the worship of the beast and his image will be found in every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

This is shown in yet another way. In the record of the beast it is said: "*All that dwell upon the earth* shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If *any man* have an ear, let him hear." Rev. 13:8, 9. And of the other beast, which gives life unto the image of the beast, it is written that "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast." Rev. 13:12. These scriptures thus testify to the universality of the worship of the beast and his image.

The beast is possessed of power and "great authority," insomuch that "all the world wondered after the beast," and exclaimed, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to

make war with him?" And all this power and great authority are exerted to compel all that dwell upon the earth to worship the beast.

Then, when the other beast rises, which is instrumental in the making, and the giving of life to, the image of the beast, he, likewise, is possessed of great power, even as we have already read: "He exerciseth *all the power of the first beast.*" And all this power is put forth by this beast to compel all men to worship "the beast and his image."

Thus, each of these terrible powers in the earth, singly and both of them together, exert all their power, singly and unitedly, to compel all to worship the two, both singly and unitedly. And to what extent they go in the exercise of this power is shown in the description of the work of the image of the beast, which is made alive and active by the "other beast," which exercises "all the power of the first beast." On this it is written: "He had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that *as many as would not worship the image of the beast SHOULD BE KILLED.* And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Rev. 13:15-17.

Since, then, all this power, which is indeed all the power of the earth, is so exerted to compel all men to worship these terrible and terribly wicked powers, how appropriate it is that the first voice of the great threefold message should proclaim "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," "Fear God, and give glory to him," "and *worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*"

By this outline of the conditions of things in the world, which makes essential the loud, warning voice of the Third Angel's Message, it is seen that in the time of this message there is a universal conflict between the powers of evil and the power of God. All the powers of "the beast and his image," actuated by the spirit of the dragon, "which is the devil, and Satan," are put forth to prevent all men everywhere from worshiping the true God. And because of this, and in view of the terrible consequences of such a thing, the Lord sends his great threefold message, warning all mankind against the terrible work of these powers, and calling upon all to worship him, the true God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters. From the scriptures relating to the case, it is evident that the contest is a terrible one. On the one hand is all the power and wrath of the beast and his image, persecuting unto death all who will not worship them. On the other hand is "the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation," upon all who worship the beast and his image.

And there will be those who will *not worship* the beast and his image,—those who *will worship him* that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters,—who will *not receive* the mark of the beast in their foreheads or their hands, but *will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

And these *get "the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,"* and "stand on the sea of glass" before the great

white throne, "having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," which is the song of their triumph, through the power of God, over all false worship, over all the power of the beast and his image, exercised to enforce false worship.

Next week the study in the message will be, What Is the Beast? and What His Image?

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Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Vol. 77, No. 11, Mar. 13, 1900, p. 168.

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